

*The best Use of RICHES.*

N<sup>o</sup> 20

A  
**SERMON**

Preach'd at

*Banbury in Oxford-shire,*

T H E

Ninth of *July*, 1706;

Occasion'd by the

**CHARITY-SCHOOL**

There lately Erected.

By *BENJAMIN LOVELING*, M.A.  
Vicar of *Banbury*. *Q*

Published at the Request of several of the TRUSTEES  
of the said CHARITY-SCHOOL.

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To the right honourable *Mountague*,  
Earl of *Abingdon*; The right ho-  
nourable and right reverend Fa-  
ther in God, *Nathanael* Lord *Crew*,  
Bishop of *Durham*; The right ho-  
nourable *Richard* Lord *Willoughby*  
of *Brooke*; The right honourable  
*Francis* Lord *Guilford*; And the  
rest of the worthy Gentlemen,  
Subscribers to the *Charity-School*  
erected in *Banbury*.

**B**eing desired to Publish the following Di-  
scourse, I cannot think of a properer  
Patronage than Your Selves, by whose  
Piety and Bounty't was happily occasioned. Nor  
can I doubt but the same remarkable Goodness  
that induced You to commiserate so many mean  
and ignorant Souls, will be likewise extended  
to this small Tribute of Gratitude, which I  
humbly offer to Your Generosity and Candor;  
hoping that my Sincerity and due Zeal for pro-  
moting

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## The Epistle Dedicatory.

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*moting this necessary Undertaking, will in some measure excuse the Imperfections of my Pen.*

*I shall not recount to You, how very useful, in regard as well to the Nation as to the National Church, the Erecting Charity-Schools are. These Points, tho' they had not been touch'd upon in the Sermon, would nevertheless have been but needless here, I having the great Honour of Addressing so many Noble and Considerate Persons, who are Themselves liberal Contributors to the same commendable Design; and therefore must be concluded to have a just View of all its good Consequences.*

*I shall only wish Your Religious Examples may be both followed on Earth, and rewarded in Heaven; and crave leave to Subscribe myself,*

Your most Obedient and

obliged humble Servant,

*Benjamin Loveling.*

*The*



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*The best Use of Riches.*

A

SERMON

Preach'd at

*Banbury in Oxford-shire, &c.*

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Prov. III.†ix.

*Honour the Lord with thy Substance.*

**T**Is an uncontested Truth, That the Things of this World are either serviceable or prejudicial to our future Happiness, in proportion to our discreet Use or Abuse of 'em. As we are all sent into the World, as so many industrious Candidates for the Joys of Heaven; so is it highly expressive of the Divine Wisdom, and not inconsistent with the Goodness of God Almighty's Providence, that the World should be furnished

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nished with such Objects, as may as well obstruct, as conduce to our Felicity. Such is the Frame of Mankind, and the Scope of revealed, and indeed natural Religion, that one cannot well miscarry on the account either of Honours, Pleasures, or Riches, without offering a most unworthy Violence both to his Reason and Conscience: which as it vindicates the Bounty of God, in affording us these temporal Accommodations; so is it no less a Defence of his Justice, whenever he shall punish us for our Mismanagement of 'em.

And Riches in particular, which, through the Policy of Satan, and the Perverseness of our own Hearts, but too often separate us from our God, are nevertheless capable of procuring his Favour; nay, are bestowed on Mankind for that beneficial Purpose. Indeed, the Deity being a spiritual, self-sufficient Being, 'tis not to be supposed, that any, the sublimest of his Creatures, much less the mean and gross Emoluments of his Foot-stool, can in the least contribute to his infinite Happiness: And yet, for the Advancement of our Interest in another World, he has graciously vouchsafed to put us into a Method, whereby our Wealth may be subservient to his *Glory*, by enjoyning us in the Text, to *Honour him with our Substance*.

The Extent of which Precept is as large and comprehensive, as the good Uses whereunto our Riches may effectually tend, are various and different. Nor is it to be supposed, but there are several Ways of *honouring the Lord with our Substance*, there being so many distinct Methods of *disbonouring* him therewith.

Men



Men *dishonour* God with their *Substance*, when they make it conduce to ill and forbidden Designs; when it administers to their Lusts and irregular Appetites; when, by reason of their large Possessions, they are proud, or oppressive, or litigious, or intemperate, or luxurious, or worldly, or idle, or any way disserviceable to Society and Religion; whereby not only the Authority of God is contemn'd, his Goodness and Compassion ungratefully abused, his Power insulted, his Omniscience not considered, his Justice and Holiness disregarded and contradicted, his Government disturbed, and his Interest weakened: but the wicked Cause of his, as well as our own implacable Adversary, is espoused and promoted, and all his endearing Favours, the Redemption it self not excepted, *sowed* into the most astonishing and tremendous Judgments.

Wherefore we may assert in general, That he *honours* the Lord with his Substance, who lays it out, as well as gets it, according to the excellent Rules of Morality and the Gospel. And, to speak more particularly, when we erect or adorn Temples for Divine Service; when we support such as Minister at God's *Altar*; when by our Interest and Wealth we screen the Unfortunate from the heat of the Oppressor; when we spare no Cost to propagate Christianity, where it is not, or to preserve it where it is planted; when we zealously contribute to the instructing Youth in Sound and Orthodox Principles, and make all *due Provision* for cloathing the Naked, feeding the Hungry, and putting Orphans and poor helpless Children into some honest Way of Living, whereby they might be useful as well to the Pub-

lick, as to Themselves, and their Relations: When such generous Acts of Piety and Compassion, of Bounty and Publick-spiritedness are judiciously and chearfully exerted by us, we may be very well satisfied, That we do *honour the Lord with our Substance.*

To omit all other Instances, what can more conduce to the Honour and Glory of our *heavenly Father*, than seasonable Charity to the Bodies and Souls of his distressed *Children*? How can Men express an higher Regard for *Christ*, the *Head of the Church*, than by taking care of even *the feeblest Members* of his *Mystical Body*? Does it not obviously redound to the Honour of our great Legislator, when we endeavour to secure his sacred Laws from Violation or Contempt, by letting in the bright *Beams* of the *Sun of Righteousness* into those unhappy Souls on whom the *Prince of Darkness* had but too considerable an Influence? In a Word, We cannot better evidence our own Veneration for the Deity, or beget in other Men a juster sense of his Honour, than by advancing such important Designs, as are both agreeable to his sacred Will, and very naturally expressive of his glorious Attributes, as well as destructive of the opposite Intreagues of his Enemy, the Devil.

Since then the making a charitable Provision for poor ignorant Christians, is apparently one way of honouring the Lord with our Substance: It can be no *Solecism* to insist upon it, especially at a time when we are met together on purpose to *recommend, enforce* and *fix* such a charitable Undertaking in this Place, as has an undeniable Aspect on *God's Honour and Glory.*

And



And because some may possibly be ignorant of the *Nature* or *Extent* of the Duty of *Liberality*; others may not so well understand their *Obligation* to discharge it; and others not approve of our *Method* of doing it: I shall therefore confine my self to these three Heads:

*First*, I shall consider what Rules are to be observed in Relation to the Exercise of Charity in general.

*Secondly*, I shall lay down such Arguments as may prevail with Men to be Liberal and Charitable.

*Thirdly*, I shall endeavour to enforce the Charity we have begun, from *peculiar* Motives and Considerations.

These Points, if seriously considered, will, I hope, not only reconcile us to this charitable Undertaking, but dispose us also on all other due Occasions, to do good and to distribute.

First then, That our charitable Acts of what kind soever, may be acceptable to God, and conduce to his *Honour*, I have proposed to consider, what Rules are necessary to be observed in relation to the Exercise of Charity in general.

Three Things seem highly requisite as to this Matter, (*i. e.*) *What we give*; *To whom we give*; And *why, or upon what Principle we give*: For if our Alms exceed our own Circumstances, or are not apportion'd to the Necessities of Objects; or if they are bestowed for fordid or indirect Ends; our Charity will

will be defective, and consequently not approved by the Searcher of Hearts.

As to the *Quantity* of our Distributions to the Poor, regard must always be had to our respective Conditions. This was the Sure Rule which the Apostle laid down, not only for the Church of *Corinth*, but the Churches of *Galatia*; and was, no doubt, design'd to be a standing Direction to all Churches in all Ages: *Let every one of you lay by him in store, (for the Relief of poor Christians) as God hath prospered him.*

1 Cor. 16. 2.  
2 Cor. 8. 12.  
\* ἐκ τῆς  
ὑπερβολῆς  
αὐτοῦ.  
Mark 12. 41, 42, 43, 44.  
God measures our Charity by the Nature of our Circumstances. For if there be first a willing Mind, it is accepted according to that a Man hath. Hence the poor Widow, who out of the \* Necessaries of Life, cast but two Mites into the Jewish Treasury, for charitable Uses, was adjudg'd by our Saviour to have exceeded all the Gifts, which the Rich offered out of their Abundance.

We are therefore to condemn a Practice that has obtain'd among too many, (*viz.*) Of enquiring how much others give, before they give themselves, and making them their Standard: Whereas *Stingy* Examples are not to be followed; and admitting a Man bestows with Discretion, he can be no proper Pattern to others, whose Conditions in the World are either *better* or *worse*. So that since 'tis extreamly difficult to find several Persons exactly in the same Circumstances, and where they happen to be so, he that gives first may possibly give too much, or too little; 'tis very evident, that one Man's Bounty ought to be no Measure to anothers, but every Man according as he purposeth in his Heart, so let him give.

And



And as our Alms are to be suited to our respective Circumstances; so the Conditions of some may possibly be such as not to oblige them to any Deeds of Charity. Supposing a Person possessed of nothing, in such a Case, nothing is expected from him. For as we are not to do *Evil that Good may come*, so neither are we to steal from the Rich, to relieve the Poor. Not he who hath not, but he who hath this World's Wealth, and seeth his Brother have need, and shatteth up his Bawls of Compassion from him, is declared not to have the Love of God dwelling in him. 1 Joh. 3. 17.

Nay, 'tis possible, Men may be possessed of considerable Estates, and yet excused from Acts of this Nature. As when the Debts they have contracted, are so much beyond their Effects, that they are in no probable Way of satisfying their Creditors. In such perplext Circumstances, they are oblig'd in Conscience to suspend their Benefactions. Because what is given to charitable Uses, ought to be one's own, and we are no more to cheat than steal for the Relief of the Indigent.

We will assert farther, That such as are in no likelihood of providing for their Families, though they be not actually in Debt, are nevertheless equally exempted. As *Charity is to begin at home*, so if it cannot extend farther without apparent Prejudice to those of our own House, it may, it must end there. For how can that Man be properly charitable, who hath denied the Faith? Or he a good Christian that is worse than an Infidel? 1 Tim. 5. 8.

Indeed the Plea of providing for one's own House, has been, I fear, but too often, an unjustifiable Hindrance to Works of Charity; Men being very frequently much mistaken as to the Measure of such pri-

private Provisions. Some are not satisfied unless  
 Isa. 5. 8. they can *joyn House to House, and lay Field to Field*,  
 that themselves and their Families *may be placed alone*  
*in the Midst of the Earth*. But against such Persons  
 there is a *Woe* denounc'd; and this Curse is often  
 executed, when those very Estates which were frau-  
 dulently gotten, or avaritiously hoarded up, are sa-  
 crificed to the Extravagances of the Miser's Po-  
 sterity.

Parents are to take special Care, that what they  
 bequeath their Children, do of Right belong to 'em.  
 But this they do not, who are not according to their  
 Abilities charitable; because besides their *Childrens*  
 proper Portion, they leave 'em the *Poors* too, which  
 being unjustly detain'd, cankers and consumes the  
 whole Inheritance. In short, He who declines Op-  
 portunities of relieving the Poor, out of Pretence of  
 providing for his Family, when in all Probability,  
 he can both assist them, and put his Dependents into  
 some honest, creditable Way of Living, no way  
 unsuitable to their Birth and Station, is very inex-  
 cusable.

There is still one thing that has not been touch'd  
 upon in Relation to the *Quantity* of what we give to  
 the Poor; and that is, The bestowing our Alms so  
 judiciously, that they might, if possible, extend to  
 all proper Objects. To give all we can conveniently  
 spare, at one time, is a manifest Injury to those that  
 may be recommended to us at another, who have  
 as just a Claim to our Pity and Munificence. In this  
 Sense we are to give *sparingly*, that we may give  
*constantly*; that none, at least not too many deserving  
 Objects, might be deny'd our Assistance.

And



And thus having considered how our Charity must be manag'd, with respect to what we give: I come now to let you know what ought to be done in Reference to the Persons *to whom we give*.

And here the *Quality* of the *Object* is as much to be regarded, as was before the *Quantity* of the *Alms*. Before any Man can be truly an Object of Charity, he must indeed, be reduced to Want. 'Tis as unreasonable to squander away one's Wealth on such as need it not, to the Detriment of such as do, as 'tis to spread Dung on a rich Soil, while barren Places are wholly neglected. Wherefore the Apostle speaks of *distributing* (not to Mens Superfluities, Rom. 12. but), *to their Necessities*. 13.

The Dispositions of Persons in Want ought likewise to be considered. When we see Men bearing an adverse State with an Air of Humility, Patience, and a due Resignation of themselves and Circumstances to the wise Disposals of Divine Providence: This should incline us to higher Degrees of Liberality, than when an empty Pocket is accompanied with an Heart full of Pride, Debauchery, Envy, and Malice. Something indeed is to be given even to these Men, but not enough to feed their irregular Appetites, or to prevent that Reformation which Adversity might produce in 'em.

'Twill also be not amiss to consider the Education of Persons in Want, or their Condition in the World before they were reduced. They that have lived in very good Fashion, whose Birth and Breeding and Fortune always entitl'd 'em to Plenty and Ease, seem when impoverish'd, to require more than common Acts of Beneficence; since the Charity must exceed

the ordinary Size, before they can well relish or receive Comfort by it.

'Twill in like manner be convenient to observe what it was that chiefly contributed to their indigent Condition. That Man being not so much an Object of Compassion, whose mean Circumstances are owing to his Vices, as he whose Indigence is occasion'd by want of Contrivance, or the overruling Decrees of Divine Providence.

If we see a rich *Job*, through Injustice, Oppression, or some extraordinary Determination of Heaven, losing all his Substance, and wanting even the Necessaries of Nature ; such an innocent Soul, being a just Object of our utmost Concern and Pity, ought to be caressed with all the affectionate Pledges of our Bounty and Tenderness.

Nay, admitting the Party in Distress be reduced by want of Contrivance only, not through any unavoidable Accident ; even this does by no Means debar him of our Charity : Since 'twas not so much his *Fault*, as his *Infirmity* that occasion'd it. To design well is indeed in every Man's Power : but to pursue those excellent Measures that are strictly prudent and beneficial is the Felicity of but a few. Consequently, they who are not blest with such an happy and discerning Judgment, ought rather to be commiserated than insulted in Calamity.

But we will advance yet farther, and suppose Vice and Excess to have brought a Man to Poverty ; he may certainly for all that, be an Object of Compassion. One may relieve Persons reduced by Extravagancy without approving those Sins which consumed their Substance. Possibly they have repented

of



of their former Lewdness; and then those Iniquities that are blotted out of God's Book, should not be so highly resented by us, as to obstruct our Bounty, lest *what God hath cleansed*, should be too much despised or neglected by us.

Indeed, all Mankind have a Right to our Munificence, when their Condition in the World is Mean and Craving; we being all of us, but so many several *Individuals* of one common *Species*, and *stampt* with the same Divine *Image* and *Superscription* of the *King of Kings*. Wherefore 'tis the general Injunction of the Apostle, *Do good unto all* Gal. 6. 10. *Men*.

But notwithstanding this common Band, which naturally ties us to one another, there being other considerable Obligations whereby we are more intimately united, we are particularly concern'd to take care of them who stand related to us in such endearing Respects. For which reason the same Apostle commands us to *do good, especially to the Household* *ibid.* *of Faith*.

And because all Benefactions are to be rated in proportion to the Advantages or Uses of them; hence are we chiefly oblig'd not only to give, but to contribute very bountifully to such glorious Designs, as more directly tend to the Honour of God, the Good of poor Souls, the Civilizing Mankind, and the Strength of the Community whereof we are Members. These are all such noble Purposes, so agreeable to the Ends of the Christian, and indeed Natural Religion, that a Man must renounce his *Creed*, nay, his very *Reason*, or neglect no fair Opportunity of promoting 'em.

After all, we are not to give our Alms to every Man in Poverty. For Idleness, when there is both an Opportunity and Capacity for Labour, forfeits all manner of Claim to Munificence. St. Paul has put this Case beyond all controversy in his second Epistle to the *Thessalonians*, where he expressly gives this Rule, *If any would not work, neither should he eat.*

Chap. 3.  
16.

And as Idleness, so by the Laws of this Nation, Vagrancy too incapacitates the Poor for our Bounty. We are prohibited to relieve wandering Beggars at our Doors, tho' never so much in distress. Nor have our Governours in this exceeded their Province: They do not prohibit Charity in general, and therefore cannot be said to contradict the Substance of a Divine Command; They only determine some Circumstances relating to the better Performance of charitable Acts, for preventing habitual Idleness, Imposture, Lewdness, Disorder, and National Damages, which indeed is very obviously the Magistrates Business, and becomes the Wisdom and Integrity of Legislators, who are Guardians of the Publick.

But tho' all the Particulars above-mentioned be observ'd, we are still blamable if we do not consider, *Why, or upon what Principle, we give our Alms.*

We must not give 'em out of Ostentation: For Matt. 6. 1. *if we do our Alms before Men, to be seen of them, we have no Reward of our Father which is in Heaven.*

Luke 14. Nor out of hopes of having the Favour retaliated; 12, 13, 14. *since our Saviour has forbidden those Entertainments*  
and



and Benefactions, that are given in expectation that *Recompence be made us.*

Nor out of design to upbraid Men with the Kindnesses we have conferr'd on 'em. *The reproach-<sup>Ecclesiasticus 29. 28.</sup>ing not only of the lender, but of the giver too, being Things grievous to a Man of Understanding.*

But we must be liberal to the Needy out of Love to God; out of a sincere Obedience to his Sacred Will; out of a deep Sense of the Exigences and Miseries they are fallen into; and out of a full Conviction, that we shall be eternally rewarded in another World, for our Usefulness in this.

So that when we distribute our Charity upon *these Principles to real Objects, within the compass of our respective Circumstances,* our Substance will then be Instrumental to God's Honour and Glory.

And that we may be induced to make this good Use of our Possessions, I am now to proceed,

*Secondly,* To lay down such Arguments as may prevail upon Men to be Liberal or Charitable.

The Faculties of our Souls, and the Structure of our Bodies, seem very forcible Inducements to Acts of Liberality. We are naturally capable of comparing one Object with another, of distinguishing which Objects are most valuable, and of being sensible, that the most valuable deserves the greatest part of our Care and Affections. Now he must be besotted to a very amazing degree, that cannot discern betwixt the Worth of Beings *created in the Image of God*, and of the Wealth of this World, which is only subservient to 'em. He then, who out of excessive Love for temporal good Things, shall

shall suffer the Needy to perish unassisted, as he prefers mean Objects to those that are far more excellent; so does he therein suppress the Convictions of his rational Nature, and renders that strong Motive to Charity, which arises from the Faculties of his Soul, altogether ineffectual.

Nor does he less oppose those Inducements to Pity and Liberality, which the very Structure of his bodily Part might administer to him. The Body is so exquisitely tender, so incapable of subsisting without necessary Provision, and withal so uneasy to the Mind at the very approach of extream Poverty, that a Man in indigent Circumstances, without seasonable Relief, cannot chuse but be miserable. This no Creature is a stranger to, who carries about him an human Body. Whatever his Condition in the World be, as long as he exists, his very Appetite and Passions, and Senses must give him a formidable *Idea* of the Calamities of Want. The Author of Nature has so contrived our Being, that we cannot well be uncompassionate, without throwing off the Man. The Sense of Pain which we have in our selves, may move us to endeavour to make others easie. Our own Experience of the Disadvantages of Nakedness, and of the intolerable Perplexities of a neglected craving Appetite, may prevail with us to *cover the Naked with a Garment, and feed the Hungry*. So that we must act contrary to the bent of our very Frame, that is, we must act *unnaturally*, before we can be illiberal to proper Objects.

And



And as to be uncharitable to the Helpless and Destitute, is to oppose the Dictates of human Frame : So is such a selfish, hard-hearted Principle, a palpable Contradiction to the useful Ends of Civil Society. Betwixt the Body Politick and the Natural Body, there is a discernable *Analogy*. The Members of the Natural Body, whether we consider their Motion, Situation, or respective Operations, are all design'd to be assisting to each other; and if any one Member fails of giving such Assistance, the whole Body seems to labour under sensible Disadvantages. And certainly, nothing can tend more to the prosperity of the Body Politick, than for the Rich to Relieve and Support its poor and feeble Members. Money is the Blood of the Body Politick, and sordid Misers who will not let it Circulate in some measure to every indigent Member, are equally pernicious to Civil Societies, as those unhappy Parts of the natural Body can be, which obstructing the regular Circulation of the Blood, causes any of the neglected Members to wither and perish.

But the illiberal Person does not more contradict his own Nature, and the generous Ends of Civil Society, than he does the Suggestions even of common Prudence. Men's Wealth and Stations in this World being extreamly deceitful and slippery, 'tis the Province of Prudence to propose such safe Measures, as might render 'em as easie as possible to us, and our selves not unhappy, tho' we should happen to be cast into a more despicable Condition. But these Measures that Prudence dictates, are most certainly inconsistent with Covetousness or Illiberality,

lity, which makes a Man odious to Mankind in the height of Prosperity, and when reduced to a low Estate, exposes him to a general Contempt, and Grief without Pity. Whereas a bountiful Spirit is so laudable and very engaging, that in Plenty it entitles Men to the sincere Regards of all their Acquaintance, and to the earnest Prayers and Blessings of the Poor: And in Poverty recommends them to the kind Benefactions of the Rich and Prosperous. So that as long as there is the least Spark either of Honour, Gratitude, or good Nature in the World, the *liberal Soul* can be no unpitied Sufferer, whatever Losses he may meet with in the Course of his Life.

Indeed, common Justice, as well as common Prudence might effectually enforce all charitable Distributions. 'Tis the very Foundation of Justice, *To do as we would be done unto*: And by this excellent Rule we are taught to relieve Objects of Charity; because the Miser himself, were he *really* in Want, would be as forward to ask Alms, and as glad to succeed by asking, as the most importunate Beggar he ever rejected.

One material Branch of Justice, is the laying out Riches, according to the Will, Intention, and Commands of the Proprietor. And whoever receives any Sum of Money upon the compassionate Terms of parting with it to Persons in Necessity, reserving only what is requisite to his own Quality and Station; and yet shall suffer his Wealth to rust by him, whilst the Hungry and Naked are neither Fed nor Cloathed, is most notoriously Unjust. Now God, who created all worldly Affluences, must needs be  
con-



concluded to have Originally a *Property* in 'em ; and having lent them to the Rich during Pleasure, cannot be supposed to have parted with that Property. Consequently, since he has enjoyn'd rich Men, under the most tremendous Penalties, to take Care of the Needy ; their Neglect in this Case, being very evidently a Breach of Trust, is therefore an undeniable Argument of their Injustice.

Nay, a rich covetous Man cannot offer up his Prayers to God, without the daring Sin of Hypocrisie. 'Tis every one's Duty to pity and pray for the *Fatherless* and the *Widow*, and such as are in *Necessity*, that God would assist 'em in, and in his due time give 'em an happy Issue out of all their Distresses. But all this is meer *Banter* and *Hypocrisie*, when such as pretend to pray for their Deliverances, will part with nothing that might make their Prayers effectual. The Providence of God is seldom employ'd in helping Men miraculously, especially when they may be well reliev'd by ordinary Means. When therefore rich Men shall desire God to be merciful to the Afflicted, while to their own Knowledge, the ordinary Means of redressing 'em prescribed by him, is Humane Charity, which they are resolved never to exercise : What is this but a tempting of Providence ! a mocking of Almighty God ! a too evident Token of the most provoking Dissimulation !

As to the Necessaries of Life, the Rich cannot use much more than the Poor. Nature requires but little to satisfy, and perhaps less to support it self. The Appetites of Men are wisely stinted ; or if Luxury overflows those Natural Boundaries, yet  
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the Slenderneſs of their Make will not admit of very prodigious Expences. So that many Men have more than they can poſſibly beſtow even upon their own Extravagances. Whence 'twill follow, That ſome muſt have Riches to ſpare in ſpight of their Luſts, and ſo muſt be conſtrain'd to relieve the Diſtreſſed, or to let their Wealth lie by as insignificant Rubbiſh: And 'twill follow likewise, That that munificent and wiſe Being, who has made Nature, ſo as to be content with a little, and to be clogg'd with Exceſs; and has alſo given ſome much more than can poſſibly be ſpent, at leaſt, within the Compaſs of Decency and Religion, expects what is ſuperfluous in ſuch Men, ſhould by their own Choice be lopt off for the Support of others who are ſinking under their Wants.

The Example of Almighty God, whom *as dear Children we are to be Followers of*, might reaſonably inſpire us with beneficent Reſolutions. What poor, helpſeſs, utterly deſtitute Creatures would Mankind, as well as the reſt of the Creation, be, did not he who *upbraideth not, give liberally to 'em!* If he did not ſend us *Seed-time, and Harvest, and fruitful Seasons*; we who came all of us naked into the World, wou'd, alas! quickly return naked out of it. We may ſay to the richeſt Man on Earth, *What haſt thou that thou didſt not receive*; and what didſt thou receive, that thou didſt not receive from God? Since then the Rich who are no nearer ally'd to their Creator than the Poor, do nevertheless by his undeſerved Munificence enjoy thoſe Temporal Bleſſings which theſe ſtand in need of; how can they chuſe but impart ſomething to 'em of his free Bounty; eſpe-

James 1.

5.

Gen. 8.

22.

Acts 14.

17.

1 Cor. 4.

7.



especially, when the main Design of such his unequal Distributions, is to try their Gratitude and Obedience to his just Commands, their Temper to their indigent, depending Inferiours, and their Deference and Respect to his own most glorious Example!

An uncharitable Christian seems a Contradiction in Terms. The Substance and Design of Christianity being to create such a sincere Union among Mankind, as might make 'em *Sympathize* with each other, grieving at their Adversity, as well as rejoycing at their good Success; 'tis impossible any Person can be a Conscientious Christian, who does not pity, and according to his Ability relieve his Neighbours in their Exigencies. Not to mention the several Commands that enjoin so reasonable, so compassionate, so human, nay, so divine and godlike a Practice; or the many moving Exhortations that perswade to it; or the precious Promises consequent upon it; or the astonishing *Threats* denounc'd against the Neglect of it: The very Consideration of our being by Baptism incorporated into the *Body of Christ*, and therefore *Members one of another*, as well as of him our *Mystical Head*; is of it self sufficient to work in our Souls a cordial Tendernefs, a deep Concern and Regard for our poor Fellow-Christians, and an unbyass'd Resolution to serve and succour 'em. From this very Argument of our being all Members of the same Body, does the Apostle draw this pertinent Inference; *Whether one Member suffer, all the Members* 1 Cor. 12. *suffer with it, &c.* Intimating how natural and just it 26. is for one Christian to be so affected with the Misfortunes of another, as to endeavour by all lawful Means to remove 'em. And according to this very rea-

sonable *Allusion*, the first Christians made it great part of their Business to provide for the Needy. When in compliance with the Hardships of the Times, the Rich sold their Possessions, and laid the Money at the Apostles Feet, all the Care imaginable was taken, that distribution might be made unto every Man according as he had need. As soon as the Apostles found, that the Grecian Widows were neglected in the daily Ministration, rather than so unchristian a Treatment should want Reformation, an Order of Men were immediately instituted to redress their Grievances; And soon after, for the poor Saints, there were weekly Collections. In a word, whoever consults Antiquity will be satisfied, that the *Sportula* which was in the Possession of their Successors the Bishops, was for the Support not only of them that ministered in Holy Things, but of the Needy and the Helpless. And if the same Spirit of Liberality and Compassion be not among us, let us pretend never so to the Name of Christians, sure I am, we sink very obviously below the Character of meer Men.

But were there no other Motives to the Duty of Liberality, this one Consideration, That thereby we shall honour the Lord with our Substance, might be enough to recommend it. What can be a truer Satisfaction to any Person that has but the least Sense of Gratitude, Piety, or Justice, than to lay out those Accommodations to his Glory, who not only created 'em, but bestowed 'em on us chiefly for that very End! Our blessed Saviour has expressly assured us, that what Kindness we do to any of his distressed Members, we do to himself; and that at the last Day, when he shall solemnly appear in the Quality



lity of an universal Judge, he will both publicly acknowledge and reward our Charity. How then can we refuse, in opposition to our own eternal Interest, in contempt of all that he has done, suffered and merited for us, to relieve those poor afflicted Souls, for whose Salvation he, *who thought it not robbery to be equal with God*, condescended to die! We slight as well our Almighty Creator, our dear and most affectionate Redeemer, as our Fellow-Creatures, and our Fellow-Members, when we neglect their Wants, and will not *honour the Lord* by supplying 'em with our *Substance*. Phil. 2.6.

Thus much may suffice to recommend the Duty of Charity in general; which may likewise reconcile us to the charitable Design we are now carrying on, unless something disagreeable either to the Nature or Ends of Christian Charity; or to the real Interest of the Publick; or to the plain Dictates of Piety or Prudence appears therein. But that this our *Compassionate Undertaking* is so far from contradicting these glorious Purposes, that it, indeed, advances 'em, rendring Men truly happy in a Private, as well as useful and praise-worthy in a Publick Capacity, I have proposed to satisfy you, by endeavouring,

*Thirdly*, To enforce the Charity we have begun in this Place, from peculiar Motives and Considerations.

This is a very proper Method of exercising our Liberality; here we can meet with no Imposition; no Cheat, to make us wish we had with-held our Distri-

Distributions: Our Kindnesses are here exerted judiciously, and with Discretion, being the successful Result of mature Deliberation, and united Counsel. Whilst private Benefactions are for the most part inconsiderable in their Consequences: this joyn't Bounty of several Persons, all in some measure concern'd to assist with their Advice, as well as with their Generosity, must be happily attended with Publick Advantages.

'Tis not only an Ornament, but a Defence and Security to Civil Societies, to have even their poorest Members liberally provided for; as nothing more recommends the Natural Body to the Esteem of Men, or puts it in a better Capacity of defending it self, than a due Care of all its Parts: Whereas if any are too much neglected, there must of necessity be a Diminution both of the Beauty and the Strength of the whole.

Instead of being useles by Idleness and Ignorance, or scandalous by Cursing and common Swearing, or pernicious to the Nation by Lying, Pilfering or Theft; the young slender Plants that grow in this Nursery, are timely bent to the quite opposite good Qualities; insomuch, that when by reason of Maturity, they shall be remov'd to another Soil, they cannot well fail not only of taking root and thriving, and increasing in Substance, but also of bearing good Fruit, whereby the Publick may taste, relish, receive Nutriment from, and prosper very discernably by their future Endeavours.

How can our Nation do otherwise than Flourish, if the Inhabitants are generally Men of Probity and Conscience, Sobriety and Loyalty; if they  
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are Peaceable and Just, Devout and Industrious? These are all such excellent Accomplishments, as not only conduce naturally to the Interest of a Kingdom, but likewise engage Heaven to entail a Blessing thereon. And yet, the training up Children in the Principles of Christianity evidently produces in 'em these beneficial Vertues. Indeed our Nation is at present but too much overspread with loose Notions, with want of Zeal, and with *Zeal without Knowledge*: Because Iniquity has abounded therein, the Love of many has but too visibly wasted and sold. The Unity of the Church is miserably broken. Subjection to Governours is built rather on Humour, or some other *sandy* Foundation, than on the solid *Rock* of Humility, Reverence and a Sense of Duty. And, in a word, there is a general Decay of Piety and good Manners. Than which nothing can be a more deplorable Prognostick to any People.

Here then, we have an effectual *Antidote* for these boding Evils, whereby the Spiritual Poison, that so many have imbibed, may be seasonably expell'd, and our Ruin prevented. Were this most charitable Design but universally encourag'd, we might justly hope the next Generation would be as much a Pattern to that which comes after, as a Reproach to the present, and to many that are past. Every individual Man would then be a *little World*, govern'd with Sedateness and Regularity, having Reason in the Throne, and all the inferiour pressing Appetites and clamorous Passions obsequiously executing or patiently submitting to its awful Commands. Every House would become a Church, dedicated

dedicated to Divine Worship; and every Family a distinct Congregation. Nay, there would be as many Temples in an House, as there be Persons, the Bodies of every particular Soul, being so many sacred *Temples of the Holy Ghost*. And every Kingdom consisting of such sober and well-inclined Families, would appear an imperfect Portraiture of the *Kingdom of Heaven*.

The supream Magistrate cannot be jealous of any the least Insurrection in his Dominions, when all those that enjoy his Protection, are taught from their very Cradles, to be *subject not only for Wrath, but for Conscience sake*; and to be so far from *Speaking Evil of Dignities*, as not to *Curse the King, no, not in their Thoughts*. Subordinate Magistrates, must needs have a very easie and safe Province, when they who belong to it, *learn to be quiet and to do their own Business*; when very few, if any, Differences arise between Masters and their Servants, Husbands and Wives, or Parents and their Children: When Servants are not addicted to *Eye-Service*, or to *answer again*; and Masters treat 'em with becoming Tenderness, considering they themselves *have a Master in Heaven*. When *Husbands love their Wives and are not bitter against 'em*; and *Wives see that they reverence their Husbands*. When *Children obey their Parents in all lawful things*, endeavouring gratefully to requite their continu'd Love, and Care, and Expence; and *Parents provoke not their Children to Wrath, but bring 'em up in the Fear and Nurture of the Lord*. Neither can Ministers fail, at the last great Day, when they are to give an Account, of *doing it with Joy, and not with Grief,*



*Grief*, when their respective Congregations are not *Gain-sayers*, such as refuse to *obey those who have the Rule over them, and to submit themselves.*

These are the blessed *Fruits* of a Religious Education, and certainly no one *Branch* of the Catholic Church is more capable of *bearing* 'em than the Church of *England*; which teaches nothing in Respect either of Faith or Practice, but what *becometh sound Doctrine*; which neither favours of Superstition nor Irreverence; whose Rule in the most difficult and obscure Points, is the Holy Scripture interpreted by the Sense of the Primitive Church. This is that Orthodox Religion by which we are modelling those poor Children, who would otherwise have been, as it were, *without God in the World*, the Pests of civil Society, and a Reproach to the Christian Character. By this Means, we may hope, in some reasonable time, to heal our deplorable Breaches, to reconcile the Inhabitants of this Nation to our National Religion; that there might be no Occasion for such a Toleration, as is now, and has been for some time most scandalously perverted into all the sad Instances of Pride and Obstinacy, Schism and Contention, Disorder and Want of necessary Discipline. Wherefore no Method whatsoever can seem more serviceable either to Church or State than the glorious Work we have lately begun, and I humbly trust, will be zealously continued.

I am oblig'd to acknowledge (and I bless God that I can say it) that never any Undertaking of this expensive Nature, was more chearfully imbraced, or more successfully carried on, than this of our Charity-School; especially if it be considered,

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how 'twas propos'd at a Time, when there were not only Multitudes of vast Sums to be collected for the Use of the Publick, but a general Scarcity of Coin and Decay of Trade. The streight Circumstances the Nation was then reduced to, make your Charity the more remarkable to the World, as well as more acceptable to God.

But more particularly am I bound to take Notice of the pious Bounty of those Persons of Quality and Gentlemen, who not residing among us, are under Obligations to Charity in their respective Parishes. That they should so far consult the Good of Religion, and the real Advantage of this poor divided Place, is such an Instance of their Zeal and publick Spiritedness, as will always deserve, and I hope will always be attended with very particular Acknowledgments.

I cannot but be perswaded, That the same tender Spirit which first moved our worthy Benefactors to advance this religious and laudable Design, will still engage 'em to continue and support it. They begun it when the Nation was under a dark Cloud, when the Sword of the Enemy was not only drawn, but likely enough to be sheath'd in our Bowels. And since the good Providence of God has been so very propitious, as to bless our Arms with unexpected Triumphs; and the desirable Prospect of both an honourable and a lasting Peace, is graciously vouchsafed us; how can we better express our Gratitude to the *Lord, mighty in Battle,* than thus to *honour him with Part of our Substance?* The very discernable Alteration in these poor Objects of Charity, effected in so little a while, is no  
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small Encouragement to Subscribers. They all appear humble and respectful in their Carriage; diligent in their Business, cautious of taking God's Name in vain, use innocent Recreations at proper Seasons, resort constantly in a very agreeable Order to Divine Worship; and beyond what could have been so soon expected from 'em, joyn unanimously in the Service of the Church. Whereas before, they were Rude and Idle, fill'd the Streets with Oaths and Curses, delighted in Mischief, and never would tread consecrated Ground but with a design to Play and to give Disturbance. The ignorant and irregular Course of Life, to which they were before inured, when they arrived at Manhood, would have rendred 'em unfit for Service, or any honest Station in the World: But now, any Subscriber may in some measure, (if I may so say) *re-imburse* himself, by coming to this useful Plantation, and making choice of those to serve him, that will probably be Grateful and Faithful, Laborious and Just, Orderly, and in all respects Conscientious.

Whilst there is neither any material unfortunate Change in the Circumstances of any Subscriber; nor any Mismanagement in the Relation to the School, which we are not for redressing; I'm apt to imagine there will be no great danger of having the Bounty lessend: Especially if it be considered, That one or two such Precedents, may be attended with as ill Success, as the taking a few serviceable Stones out of a new Edifice. And who would withdraw his Subscription, when he

cannot tell how far his Example may go towards the undermining the whole Fabrick of such a Charity.

Nay, instead of withdrawing their Benefactions, it is to be hoped some will have a pious Respect for this glorious Undertaking, when they are leaving the World. In many other Places, where these Schools are erected, several considerable Legacies have been bequeath'd to them. And from the great Charity already so willingly express'd, there is no Cause to despair of some such renowned Examples among us. This is the way to benefit the Earth when we are taken from it; to *save Mens Souls from Death*, when *we are absent from the Body*; to assist others in their Conflicts with Satan, when we our selves having *obtained the end of our Hopes*, are *more than Conquerours*.

We have reason to think, That in a short time, we shall be put in a Capacity of setting up a Work-house in this Town, where the poor may learn how to live, and to ease a Place, to which they have been so long so very Chargeable: But this is design'd only to be a Provision for their Bodies; their poor precious Souls must starve, if this charitable Undertaking be not still continued. So far should that Design be from destroying this, that here ought to be a very intimate Correspondence and Communication betwixt 'em. They ought to be taken from the one to the other: And whoever shall be concern'd to Manage the Work-house, will always be sure to find a very great difference betwixt taking undisciplin'd Children out of the Market-

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ket-place, and taking 'em out of this Seminary of Christian Education.

It cannot be conceived what the Advantages may be, to this Town especially, on the account of this regulated Charity. When so many poor Children are taught their Duty to God, their Neighbour, and Themselves, and sent out into the World; 'tis not to be supposed but several of 'em will Live and Prosper by their respective Vocations: 'Tis to be supposed likewise, That if they do Prosper, the good Instructions they received at School, will keep 'em from being Ungrateful: And sure they cannot but be Ungrateful if they do not Encourage that charitable Design, to which they evidently owe whatever contributes to their Prosperity and Satisfaction. When they begin to consider, how that this Charity was Promoted by such Persons only, as did not receive any Assistance from Charity, they must needs conclude 'tis their indispensable Duty, who found by Experience the comfortable Effects of it, to contribute very largely thereto: Nor can it be imagined, that they will suffer their poor Parents and Relations to be a Burthen to a Place, by whose Bounty they are themselves kept from being burthened.

Those that Dissent from our Church, cannot think themselves excused from a Work of this Nature. Indeed some of 'em have been serviceable to it. And if others refuse, because the Children are to be instructed in the Principles of the Church of *England*; they are to consider, that many of 'em do hold the Church of *England* to be Orthodox;

thodox, and her Ministry valid. And as for such as seem not so well reconciled to the Ecclesiastical Constitution, I desire 'em to think, Whether it be not much more acceptable to God, and more beneficial to the civil Government, to train up Children in our Way, and then put 'em out to profitable Callings; than permit 'em to spend their Youth in Idleness and Disorder, and afterwards make Choice of such a Profession as will bring 'em to the Gallows, or some other ignominious Punishment: And whether it can consist with common Justice, That they should be thus eased at the Expence of charitable Christians, without making any the least Restitution or Compensation for it. And farther, Whether their Expectations are terminated in a bare Toleration or Liberty of Conscience, when having themselves a Freedom of Dissenting with Impunity *in this World*, they are so very unwilling Persons should be rightly inform'd, and be joyn'd to the Church.

But to let that pass: We that have been assisting in this pious Design, cannot but feel a secret Joy and Pleasure, from a sweet Reflection thereon; and the more so, because we are very sensible the longer 'tis continued, and the greater Perfection it arrives to, the more delightful and transporting must these Reflections be, that so many poor Fellow-Creatures and Fellow-Christians, are likely to be rescu'd from Want to Plenty; from Idleness to Industry; from Ignorance to Knowledge; from Prophaneness to Piety; from the Brink of Hell to the Mansions of Hea-



Heaven ; where they will be for ever thankful to the Instruments of their Conversion ; and be the blessed Occasion of our having more precious Gems in our Crown of Glory.

*Unto which happy State, God of his Infinite Mercy bring us all, for Jesus Christ his sake : To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all Honour and Glory now and for ever. Amen.*

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